POL 14 VIETS

INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Action

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Info

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DE RUMJIR 1244 1961257
ZNY SSSSS
R 171250Z JUL 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO RUMTBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
RUMJFS/AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
RUHHHQA/C INCPAC POLAD
STATE GRNC
BT
S E C R E T SAIGON 1244

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Laubert DATE 10/5/81
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED ☑ RELEASABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
A or FOI EXEMPTIONS

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1967 JUL 17 AM 10 40

Saigon 1244

LIMDIS

1. EMBOFF FOUND VO LONG TRIEU IN ANGRY AND DISCOURAGED FRAME OF MIND AFTERNOON JULY 17. TRIEU BEGAN BY SAYING THAT GOVERNMENT ACTIONS WITH REGARD TO THE CANDIDACY OF BIG MINH SHOW THAT THIEU AND KY THINK ONLY OF THEIR OWN INTERESTS AND WILL PAY NO HEED TO THE CONSTITUTION OR THE LAWS. HE REPEATED HIS EARLIER ASSERTION THAT BIG MINH WILL SUPPORT TRAN VAN HUONG.

2. TRIEU SAID THAT HE HAD IN THE PAST HAD CONSIDERABLE CONTACT WITH GENERAL THIEU, AND HE THEN BELIEVED THAT THIEU WAS SINCERE IN HIS EXPRESSED DESIRE FOR HONEST ELECTIONS. NOW

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HE FEARS THAT THIEU ONLY TOOK A STAND FOR CLEAN ELECTIONS IN ORDER TO USE THAT ISSUE AGAINST KY. HE EXPECTS TO SEE THIEU JULY 18 AND MEANS TO TAKE UP WITH HIM THE PROBLEM OF CONTINUED PRESSURES ON HUONG'S CAMPAIGN WORKERS. TRIEU SAID SEVERAL TIMES THAT HE AND HIS CO-CAMPAIGNERS ARE CONSIDERING WITHDRAWING FROM THE RACE IF UNFAIR TACTICS BY THE GENERALS DO NOT STOP.

3. ASKED WHAT KIND OF PRESSURES HIS CAMPAIGN WORKERS ARE UNDER, TRIEU AT FIRST WAS VAGUE, THEN ASSERTED THAT CADRES OF ANOTHER CANDIDATE HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN CA MAU. THEY WERE OPENLY CAMPAIGNING BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN PERIOD, BUT THIS IS CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT NOT FOR ARRESTS. TRIEU ADDED THAT ONE OF HIS OWN CAMPAIGN WORKERS WAS RECENTLY TOLD HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IF HE HAD NOT BEEN A PERSONAL FRIEND OF THE PROVINCIAL CHIEF JUSTICE IN THE PROVINCE WHERE HE WAS WORKING. TRIEU ALSO REFERRED TO CENSOR-

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SHIP OF AN INTERVIEW WITH TRAN VAN HUONG WHICH APPEARED IN THE JULY 12 EDITION OF BINH MINH (SAIGON A-30). ASKED FOR FURTHER DETAILS, TRIEU ONLY SAID THAT HE COULD GIVE EMBOFF LIST OF THE UNFAIR TACTICS USED BY THE GOVERNMENT. HE WILL DO SO

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IF HUONG DECIDES TO WITHDRAW. HE THEN TURNED TO THE PROBLEM OF CAMPAIGN FUNDS. HE AND HIS CO-CAMPAIGNERS HAVE ONLY THREE MILLION PIASTERS TO SPEND, AND THIS IS NOTHING COMPARED TO WHAT KY AND THIEU WILL SPEND.

4. RETURNING TO THE CANDIDACY OF BIG MINH, TRIEU CLAIMED THAT HE AND HUONG HAVE REPEATEDLY DISSUADED VARIOUS GROUPS OF STUDENTS AND YOUTHS FROM DEMONSTRATING IN FAVOR OF BIG MINH. HE SAID HE IS CERTAIN THAT DEMONSTRATIONS WILL BREAK OUT IF BIG MINH IS NOT PERMITTED TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT.

5. EMBOFF COMMENTED THAT DEMONSTRATIONS WOULD ACCOMPLISH NOTHING AND MIGHT ENDANGER THE WHOLE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS. EMBOFF ALSO OBSERVED THAT HUONG'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ELECTION RACE WOULD DEPRIVE THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE OF A CHOICE THEY DESERVE TO HAVE, AND WITHDRAWAL WOULD IN NO WAY HELP ESTABLISH DEMOCRACY. TRIEU AGREED THAT NEITHER HE NOR HUONG SHOULD TAKE ANY PRECIPITATE ACTION, AND HE PROMISED THAT HE WOULD INFORM EMBOFF BEFORE EITHER HE OR HUONG WITHDRAW FROM THE ELECTION.

6. EMBOFF THEN REMARKED THAT HUONG'S DRAFT PLATFORM (SAIGON 887) APPEARS TO BE A CONSTRUCTIVE DOCUMENT, BUT THAT MORE DETAIL ON SPECIFIC PROGRAMS MIGHT BE USEFUL,

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PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO MEASURES FOR THE ELIMINATION OF CORRUPTION AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LAND REFORM. SUCH CONCRETE PROPOSALS WOULD APPEAL TO MANY VIETNAMESE, FORCE OTHER CANDIDATES TO THINK AND SPEAK OUT ON THESE SUBJECTS, AND SHOW ALLIED NATIONS THAT THE VIETNAMESE ARE SERIOUS ABOUT TACKLING SUCH BASIC PROBLEMS. TRIEU AGREED, AND SEEMED MUCH TAKEN BY THE SUGGESTION THAT SEPARATE PAPERS MIGHT BE ISSUED ON SUCH PROBLEMS IN THE COURSE OF THE CAMPAIGN.

7. COMMENT:

A. ALTHOUGH TRIEU MAY HAVE BEEN COMPLAINING OF UNFAIR

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TACTICS SIMPLY TO KEEP UP AMERICAN PRESSURE IN FAVOR OF A FREE ELECTION. HE SEEMED GENUINELY UPSET AND DISCOURAGED. AT THE SAME TIME IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT HE APPARENTLY WAS UNABLE TO GIVE ANY CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS AGAINST HIS CAMPAIGN WORKERS. HIS COMMENTS ON THE SHORTAGE OF CAMPAIGN FUNDS SUGGEST THAT MONEY MAY NOW BE A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR THE HUONG CAMP.

B. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ON THE CA MAU ARRESTS TO WHICH TRIEU REFERRED. BUNKER
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